



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb. 68508
(402) 437-5551 (Phone) (402) 437-5093 (TDY) (402) 437-5408 (Fax)

Deborah Drbal, Business and Community Programs Specialist

USDA Rural Development Lincoln, Nebraska (402) 437-5558

Roger Trudell, Chairperson

The Santee Sioux Nation Niobrara, Nebraska (402) 857-2302

**THE SANTEE SIOUX NATION BUILDING BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE
--USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT DOLLARS ASSIST**

Santee Sioux Reservation, Knox Co.-Nebraska, March 21, 2003 – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development presented the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska (legal name now The Santee Sioux Nation) with a \$50,000 Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) symbolic funding check today. These funds will provide for a business marketing study, plan and package to attract businesses to the Santee Sioux Area to aid in boosting job opportunities and the economic conditions of the reservation.

USDA Rural Development utilized Rural Business Opportunity Grant funds earmarked for Native Americans for this project. These funds will be used over a two-year period and must deliver at least 75 percent of the project benefits to the Tribe.

The Santee Sioux Nation, located on the Federal Santee Sioux reservation in Knox County of north central Nebraska owns the industrial site and buildings that are the focus of the proposed market study. The study will help this rural area to identify their potential for bringing new and better jobs to the reservation and the county along with improved utilization of their existing labor pool. The marketing study, plan and package will help recruit businesses to locate in the 40-acre industrial park on the Santee Sioux Reservation, creating more jobs and strengthening the rural business economy. Ten new jobs per year are anticipated through the marketing tools. Only long-term sustainable industry will be sought with industries paying wages higher than the median for the area a first priority in recruitment as these jobs will provide for greater economic stability.

The Santee Sioux Nation has experienced a long-term job decline through the loss of employment opportunities in recent years. The end result being significantly high unemployment and large numbers of the population living in poverty on the reservation. These factors have led to increased out-migration and a shrinking community, impacting the reservation's economic opportunities.

"The marketing study will focus on business and industry that can be supported by the workforce available," stated Roger Trudell, chairperson of The Santee Sioux Nation. "Employment opportunities not only mean wages earned and spent in the area, but also and perhaps more importantly, pride and achievement of a better standard of living."

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Santee Economic Development's Mike Crosley and Jim Trudell work with The Santee Sioux Nation daily, and will serve as the coordinators of the marketing plan and managers of the business development project. Mike is a planner and Chairman of the Santee Economic Development since 1998, Jim is also a planner for Santee Economic Development and a member of its' board of directors.

"The study, plan and package are the logical beginning in providing a market for The Santee Sioux Nation's assets, stated Deborah Drbal, business and community programs specialist for USDA Rural Development. "USDA Rural Development is pleased to assist The Santee Sioux Nation in its business development efforts that will help bring prosperity to the area. In order to keep rural areas alive and growing, we must have job opportunities that allow for residents to prosper and to remain in their community, building for a stronger future."

The following area organizations will provide background data and assist in the analysis and business recruitment: Nebraska Public Power District, Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District, Knox County Economic Development, Great Plains Communications, Nebraska Economic Development Corporation, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and the Nebraska Business Development Center. Additionally the Indian Community College will be a source of job training for businesses in the Santee area.

Contact Deborah Drbal at USDA Rural Development Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508 or phone (402) 437-5558.
Visit: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne.

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